

BOSTON INFORMER

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The truly highbrow rag for people who can read

April 1, 2010



Applicants from 15 police forces for Longfellow Bridge police details line up to pee in a cup.

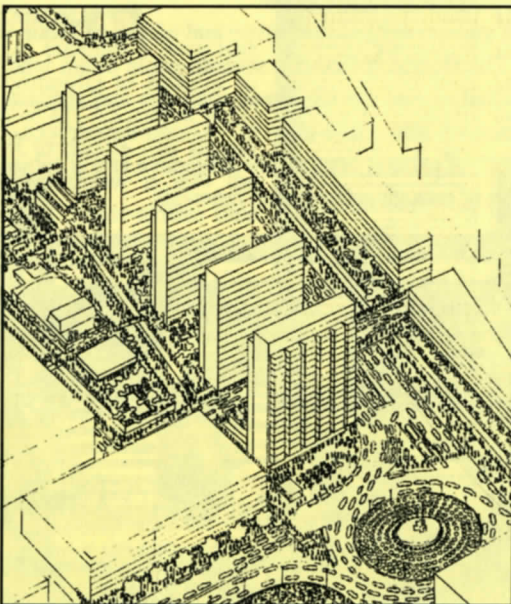
Bridge Traffic Control

MassDOT Highway Division's Longfellow Bridge reconstruction is proving to be one of its most challenging Accelerated Bridge Program projects, not because of the complexity of the rehabilitation, but because of the need to hire police details from about 15 different police forces to ensure safety and keep traffic moving. MassDOT is planning to hire the entire City of Boston police force along with police from the MBTA, State, Cambridge, Mass. General, Suffolk University and left-over Boston Municipal Police for traffic control during construction. Training for everyone starts with the \$50 million Early Action Contract to prepare the forces for the main 2011 rehabilitation project. Eligible for Recovery Act funds because it's a jobs program, the program is stimulating civilian mercenary police groups and local NRA members to help fill the gaps created by the shift of resources to the Longfellow Bridge.

Streamlined Permitting

The City and MassDOT have joined forces to develop a "one size fits all" development scheme that is designed to make the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, Christian Science Center, and Stuart Street Corridor more efficient for developers as they navigate the Article 80 permitting process.

This unique approach—at first derided by the architectural community for being not being "contextual" and promoting efficiency in the design community—



seems to be gaining supporters. The approach will save immense amounts of time and dollars normally expended on planning, design and approvals and will be able to be used in all three of these Boston locations.

Developed using Lego pieces to demonstrate the adaptability to other locations, the scheme could be imposed on other sites with minimal adjustments.

Contact the BRA for training guide on how to design this scheme (2 hour CD is free).

The New MassDOT

The recent merger of all the state transportation agencies into one, MassDOT (rhymes with goatee, not Tater Tot), has produced some synergies and eliminated duplications. For example:

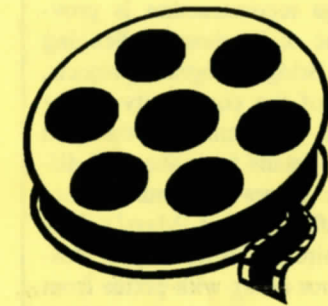
- Air traffic control at Logan Airport will take over scheduling and running MBTA buses.
- MBTA train crews will train airline cabin crews on how to slam doors shut just as passengers are about to board.
- Planes landing at Logan Airport will be fitted with Turnpike FastLane transponders so landing fees can be collected automatically.
- Massport moving sidewalk technology will be used to take passengers directly from the terminals through the Blue Line tunnels to Government Center, thus eliminating airport terminal-to-terminal buses and Blue Line trains from the airport to the city.
- MBTA revenue staff will train Highway Division personnel on ways to generate ad revenue, such as banners hanging from every structure; ad signs attached to highway destination signs; and subliminal commercial messages flashing in street signal lenses.

Movies Not to Miss!

Cop Out — a documentary about the state legislature's sleight-of-hand in appearing to reform the state transportation system by merging all agencies into one big bureaucracy—but without new funding to operate or maintain the system.

The Crazies — a fascinating documentary showing drivers texting, phoning, grooming themselves, reading, eating, drinking, etc. while driving.

Up in the Air — the search for a solution to how the former MassPike (now MassDOT) can make money from leasing air rights.



It's Complicated — an inspiring movie about Al Gore trying to explain global warming to an audience in Washington, DC, during the biggest snowstorms in Washington's history

The Last Station — a futuristic drama set in 2040 as the bankrupt MBTA desperately tries to save Park Street station while all other stations crumble into ruins.

Tooth Fairy — an inspiring story of hope as politicians everywhere look under their pillows every night hoping to find the answer to the fiscal crisis.

The Ghost Writer — an educational look at the growth of the profession of ghost writing as every young politician and movie actor wants to publish an autobiography, whether or not they have accomplished anything.

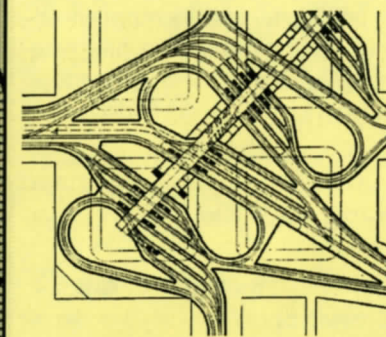
BRA 50th Anniversary!

Fifty years ago Boston consolidated planning and development functions by abolishing the City Planning Board and making the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) responsible for both planning and development. Boston is one of the few cities in North America with this singular structure. Love it or hate it, come mark the occasion with a week-long celebration with parties and tours of:

- **Charles River Park**, led by residents of the former West End
 - **Underground at City Hall Plaza** to view the remains of Hanover Street and Scollay Square, led by former area business owners
 - **Downtown Crossing**, with special viewings of the Filene's site, led by impoverished Downtown Crossing pushcart vendors (please tip)
 - An exhibit in City Hall showing **BRA planning sites** Hayward Place, Sargents Wharf and the old Hub Ticket agency place
- Finally, a celebrity gala held in a tent in City Hall Plaza featuring entertainment by former Old Howard Theater performers.

U-Turn Dreams

Discovered by a MassDOT executive on a "research" trip to Germany, this unique roadway configuration is being considered as an alternative to the marginally successful MassPike U-turn at the Allston toll plaza.



The current configuration, while helpful to drivers who made a seriously wrong turn downtown and are stuck headed westbound on I-90, is not generating the kind of revenue officials had

hoped for. The proposed configuration increases tolls collected by requiring drivers to pass through three U-turns, each time charging the drivers' transponders. An RFP for design services is expected soon.

What's Up?

New Zoning Concept — On the heels of another knock-down, drag-out "discussion" with neighborhood groups about zoning, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) has come up with a new concept to create peace and harmony. The BRA, which has looked at other zoning types in the past such as form-based codes, is proposing "character-based codes" that would regulate not the character of buildings but the characters in the area. Some neighborhoods would be zoned for passive people only, others for aggressive people, politicians, academics, windbags, wide-eyed optimists, etc.

Greenway Gambling — Following the seemingly endless stream of bad news for supporters of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway including cancelled plans for the New Center for the Arts and Culture on Greenway parcel 18 and Boston Museum on parcel 9 or 12, Massachusetts Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo proposed a solution. DeLeo announced he is seeking federal ARRA money for mini gambling casinos to create jobs and to help extract more money from tourists who just parted with some at Quincy Market buying a thimble of chowder for \$6.00. Further, DeLeo suggests the new "kiosque aliment" (that's food cart to the rest of us) proposed by the Rose Fitzgerald Greenback Conservancy could also sell lottery tickets.

Activity in Downtown Crossing — In a move designed to capitalize on cheap rent in Downtown Crossing, devastated by the Filene's debacle and store closures, Mayor Menino is leasing a storefront in a vacant building and will relocate and expand the City Store at Downtown Crossing. The City Store currently sells city surplus goods such as old street signs, parking meters, snow plow blades, carbon paper, 1996 major league soccer street banners, 2003 Marathon posters, etc. As part of his "green initiative" for both sustainability and money, Menino said the City Store will now feature items often requested by residents including used road salt, staff e-mails, votes, Menino speeches etc. The City Store is expected to open in Downtown Crossing April 1. The Mayor added that this City Store opening fits nicely with his Downtown Crossing plan.

Nomination for Quote of the Year (this is no joke) — The Boston Globe reported recently that Mayor Menino was talking about protecting the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway from being overwhelmed by a wall of tall buildings when he made this memorable statement: "It's very shortsighted of developers to complain that they paid a lot for their property, and they want a return on their investment. I don't think that's right."

Possible solution: The City and State could take over problem properties by eminent domain, with developers getting a tax write-off for their losses...

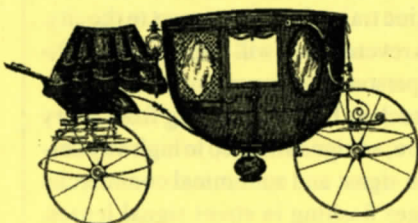
Dealing with Maintenance — Since elected officials won't vote money for maintenance—only for new projects—all new projects will be built to last only four years (a term of office), eliminating maintenance needs and generating new projects!

Greenway Gastronomy

The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenback Conservancy has announced plans to address one of Boston's most serious and debilitating problems, lack of "high-end" food on the Greenway. Its plans call for an upscale grouping of food carts to enliven the open spaces along the Greenway.

The Conservancy is requesting a variety of menus and carts, but Fenway Franks or Downtown Crossing-style food will not be included. Instead, the Conservancy wants a gourmet cuisine experience showcasing local foods and vendors that reflect Boston's history and give people a reason to linger along the Greenway. Surveys have shown that the average time people spend on the Greenway is 12 minutes; the Conservancy estimates it can increase that time to at least 25 minutes if people have to wait for vendors to squeeze fresh orange juice, churn butter and make fresh deviled eggs. The Conservancy will require "appropriate" dress and costumes for

the servers as well as cart design. The Revolutionary-period dress code will be enforced and the carts will have to pass muster before being licensed to sell on the Greenway.

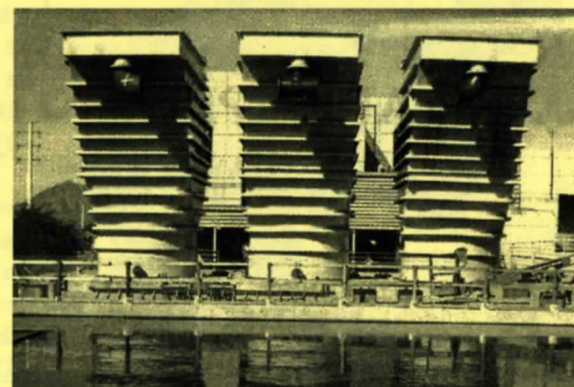


What is This?

Be the first to identify the object in the photo below and win a valuable prize. Clues below may help with the MCAS exam but not necessarily with this puzzle. Clues:

- Chiofaro's revised scheme for Harbor Garage redevelopment includes...
- Gillette builds substructure of key pedestrian bridge for Fort Point Channel Activation Plan...
- Seaport District embraces new City Hall storage facilities/Menino archives...

All guesses subject to scrutiny and whims of Trixie Watson, The Boston Informer's seventh-grade intern who has propelled us into the electronic mail age and requests all guesses be sent via e-mail to bostoninformer@cs.com. "Value" of prize is completely subjective and is subject to receipt of enough subscription renewals.



Blue Box Treasures

The recent stimulus package includes a recycling program for Boston youth attempting to squeeze in some time for the arts, victims of MCAS mania. Anyone with a musical instrument to donate can simply



throw it into the single-stream blue recycling box as usual. Trained City Hall staff (stimulus-funded position) will remove the instrument and match it with a deserving youth. Salvaging instruments for the jam session shown above took only 17 months.

Boston's Bike Share program, expected to start this summer, recently announced it had solved the problem of how to provide reliable "green" power to run the bike stations. Solar was seen as problematic, so the Mayor decided to location the bike stations over MBTA stations and capture tunnel exhaust in these giant balloons that will power the bike stations. The stations and giant balloons will conveniently be located on the east side of Boylston Street in Back Bay to avoid review by the Back Bay Architectural Commission.



Welcome to The Boston MisInformer,

the annual April Fool's issue of The Boston Informer, an otherwise "serious" newsletter covering development, construction and transportation downtown.

The Boston Informer is published by ATC Information, Inc., five times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

The Boston Informer is available by mail only. \$25.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-7030, fax (617) 437-1886 or e-mail: BostonInformer@cs.com. Web: www.bostoninformer.com.

Longfellow Bridge traffic control



"Who needs flagmen?"

You Were Asking

- Q. I heard the MBTA is thinking about additional fees to boost revenue. Do you know what it's considering?
- A. As usual, The Boston MisInformer had its ear to the ground and heard the MBTA is considering CharlieCard-operated heat and cooling in stations; charging extra to board with a bag or backpack; and selling ads on the ads already in the stations.
- Q. Is it true that budget cuts have so shrunk the number of workers in City Hall that the Mayor is thinking of moving back to Old City Hall and selling his present quarters?
- A. The number of city employees has increased during the Menino years despite the rise of online City services, but anything is possible.
- Q. You reported last month that several Boston legislators filed "Dark Shadows legislation." Is Boston going to build a monument on the Greenway commemorating that great 1960s TV series?
- A. Actually, the state representatives filed "Park Shadows legislation" to essentially extend the protection against skyscrapers casting shadows on Boston Common and Public Garden to other parks. And Dark Shadows was a dumb show.
- Q. I read that the Mayor does not want to "Manhattanize" the [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] Greenway. How is this concern being addressed?
- A. A number of businesses along the Greenway have in fact responded. Several bars have removed Manhattans from their bar lists, and Long Island Duck, Manhattan Clam Chowder and New York Strip Steak have been crossed off at some restaurants. In solidarity, Saks Fifth Avenue at the Prudential Center is considering a name change to Saks Ring Road.

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BRA is 50!

2010 marks 50 years of consolidation of planning & development functions into one agency, the Boston Redevelopment Authority! See inside for details on the big celebration.

Library
Boston Architectural College

7/1/10

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